

# PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT MATTERS

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 4, Spring 2003

A DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET PUBLICATION

## INSIDE

Linking Performance Measures to Your Strategic Plan .....	1
Brownbaggers Learn from Peers .....	2
PM Events Through June 2003 .....	2
Wanted - New PM Team Members .....	2

## LINKING PERFORMANCE MEASURES TO YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Last summer, as part of the **Fairfax Framework for Excellence**, the County Executive introduced the requirement that each agency produce a strategic plan linked to the County's purpose and vision elements. During the fall, agencies went through the Orientation Phase where the County's purpose and vision were discussed and business areas identified. The next phase – the Environmental Scan – started in the late fall and ran through early spring. In that phase, agencies agreed on their individual agency-wide mission/purpose, vision and values, as well as performed an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). As part of the Alignment Phase in late spring, agencies are discussing the results of the Environmental Scan between their business areas and are looking for connections and opportunities for cross-cutting initiatives. In early summer, the Refinement Phase will see agencies developing strategic plans with associated performance measures. Finally, in the fall, agencies will operationalize their plans by identifying specific actions required to achieve their mission and vision.

Developing an effective strategic plan is time consuming and challenging work.

But it also represents a golden opportunity to step back and look at how we do business with an eye toward determining how we can best meet the needs of our customers and partners, as well as look at how we can improve. In this regard, strategic planning is closely tied to performance measurement.

Fairfax County has been using a rigorous system of presenting quantified objectives linked to a family of measures (output, efficiency, service quality and outcome) in the budget since 1997. Almost six years ago when that effort began, some thought the County was at a serious disadvantage in developing performance measures because we lacked a Countywide strategic plan. However, agencies did have their own mission and goal statements to which quantified objectives and indicators were linked.

Now six years later, we have the opportunity to go back and validate/fine tune those mission and goal statements to reflect the County's vision elements as well as the current environment, expectations and resources. Some agencies may find that they have little or no need to revise their performance measures because they are still relevant and link appropriately to the agency strategic

plan and Countywide vision elements. Yet others may find that their strategic plan reflects a different reality than that conveyed through their existing performance measures. They will want to re-visit and revise their measures.

Developing new or revising old measures can be somewhat challenging. The County's interagency Performance Measurement (PM) Team is available as a resource if agencies have questions during this process.

Some important factors to keep in mind are:

- Measures are a powerful tool in driving desired behavior. The strategic plan is like a road map that gives direction but performance measures are where the rubber meets the road. They tell if you are actually getting there.
- Measures provide the necessary accountability to internal parties (managers) and external audiences (the public). There is a saying, "What gets measured gets done."
- Measures should be developed with this question in mind – What decisions will be improved if we use this measure?

It is also important to note that the prescribed County methodology for developing performance measures remains the same. It can be found in the Basic Performance Measurement Manual available on DMB's Infoweb site. This methodology is based on developing quantified objectives linked to cost center (business area) goals, which should help agencies in their linkage of performance measures to the strategic plan.

After your agency updates its mission, vision and goals, you will identify strategies

that will enable you to achieve them. Strategies should be specific enough to develop good measures to help manage the strategy. Measures should also be specific. For example, "being the best" or "maximizing customer satisfaction" are more like vision statements and cannot be measured as written. However, measurable indicators such as "achieve a customer satisfaction rating of at least 90 percent" will help tell if you are making progress. In addition, to ensure that we present a **balanced** picture of performance, the Family of Measures continues to form the cornerstone of performance measurement in Fairfax County. This includes output, efficiency, service quality, and outcome indicators. The most important of these is indicators is **outcome**, so any process to link performance measures to the strategic plan should include:

- Identifying the County vision element(s) that the program supports
- Envisioning the results that will mean you are meeting the vision element(s) – state these in terms of **outcomes** (the benefits or results of the program)
- Determining the strategies you will use to achieve those **outcomes** (may be multiple activities)
- Developing the rest of the family of measures including outputs (quantity of service provided), efficiency (the ratio of inputs to outputs), and service quality (the accuracy, timeliness or customer satisfaction of the service) that are associated with the designated **outcomes**.

As noted previously, the PM Team is available to help agencies that need assistance linking their performance measures to their strategic plans.



A vision is like a lighthouse. It gives direction rather than destination.

— James Mapes

## PM Events Through June 2003

As noted in the January edition of the *Performance Matters* newsletter, the PM Team will be offering the four-class series on June 11-12, 2003 (see schedule below). The Basic PM Class provides an introduction to the PM system that Fairfax County uses, particularly its terminology and methodology. It covers how to develop objectives and the corresponding Family of Measures. The Data Collection and Surveying classes are for those whose job responsibilities require them to use these tools to ensure the integrity and completeness of performance data collected and/or to survey for customer satisfaction. The Managing for Results class is intended for those who are responsible for using the PM system to manage. Its focus is identifying gaps in performance as well as how to close those gaps and enhance performance. A prerequisite for the Managing for Results Class is to have attended the Basic PM Class. All of these classes are half-day and can be registered for by contacting Barbara Emerson of the PM Team at 324-3009 (e-mail BEMERS) by **June 6, 2003**. Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. In addition, please note below that the August 7, 2003 Brownbag will be a brief one-hour refresher for those who had the basic training previously, but would benefit from a review, particularly during budget preparation when this information plays a critical role in resource requests.

EVENT	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Brownbag Lunch	May 8, 2003 / Noon - 1 p.m.	Room 120C, Government Center (GC)
Basic PM Training	June 11, 2003 / 8:30-11:30 a.m.	CR 8, GC
Data Collection	June 11, 2003 / 1-3:30 p.m.	CR 8, GC
Surveying for Customer Satisfaction	June 12, 2003 / 8:30-11:30 a.m.	CR 7, GC
Managing for Results	June 12, 2003 / 1-3:30 p.m.	CR 7, GC
Brownbag Lunch - PM Refresher	August 7, 2003 / Noon - 1 p.m.	Room 120C, GC

### WANTED – New PM Team Members

Each year at this time, the Performance Measurement Team solicits interest for new members. The typical term for members is approximately one year, with the option to extend participation. Members have commented that it often takes a year to learn the system in order to become fully contributing participants. For this reason, many are choosing to stay on for a second year or more. Since most of the current team has elected to stay on the team for another year, there are only 2-3 openings for new members. The following are the requirements and benefits of participating on the PM Team.

#### Qualifications:

- Team player
- Commitment to keeping Fairfax County a high performance organization
- Recommended for participation by the agency director
- Enhanced understanding of the County's PM methodology
- Opportunity to influence the future direction of the effort

#### Time Commitment:

- Preparation for and attendance at regular meetings (2 hours/month)
- Attendance at PM brownbag lunches as available
- Additional time as needed to perform the functions of the team

#### Term of Service:

- One year (with ability to extend pending the mutual agreement of the team and the agency director)

#### Benefits:

- Association with other professionals committed to measuring and improving performance

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please send a brief synopsis of your skills and how your participation will benefit you, your agency and the County. Please include this information in a memo from your agency director indicating his/her approval. Forward this to Barbara Emerson, Department of Management and Budget by **April 25, 2003**. Applicants will be notified shortly thereafter and an orientation will be provided.

*Performance Measurement Matters* is published quarterly by the PM Team. Editor: Barbara Emerson; Technical Support: Frann Shurnitski, Department of Management and Budget.

### BROWNBAGERS LEARN FROM PEERS

A dedicated group of County employees from a number of County agencies spent their lunch hour at the Performance Measurement Team's quarterly brownbag lunch on Thursday, February 13, 2003. This group heard their peers in other agencies describe how they are using performance measurement as a tool to manage and improve.

**Martha McIntosh** from the Department of Systems Management for Human Services enthusiastically detailed how her agency uses its call intake data to allocate resources so that customers receive timely service. Looking at performance measurement from a slightly different perspective, **Mike Finkle** from the Department of Housing and Community (DHCD) provided excellent hand-outs illustrating how DHCD is linking individuals' performance elements to the agency's performance measures. Several attendees noted that this was something they were looking at in their own agencies and were pleased to have an example to follow. The Health Department's **Evy Duff** presented an interesting case study on how that agency used its performance measures to redesign services to expectant mothers. Finally, **Cathy Spage** from the Department of Information Technology wrapped up the session with a synopsis of how her agency uses measures including help desk data to manage day-to-day operations.

The turn-out, the topic, and particularly the outstanding presentations by the four speakers, made this one of the most successful brownbags to date. The next will be held **Thursday, May 8, 2003 at noon in Room 120C** of the Government Center (corner of the cafeteria). Stay tuned for the e-mail broadcast to learn the topic and speaker(s).

**Visit the PM Website on the County intranet:**

<http://infoweb/DMB/pfmeasure.htm>

